NEWS From:

Congressman Mike Honda

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HONDA, SMITH ANNOUNCE NSF FUNDING BILL

South Bay Member Joins with House Science Committee Colleagues to Double Research Funding

Washington, DC- Today, Rep. Mike Honda (D-San Jose) joined with colleagues on the House Science Committee to announce bipartisan legislation that would commit more federal support for the National Science Foundation. Co-sponsors of the legislation include Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), Ralph Hall (D-TX), Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX), Nick Smith (R-MI), Vernon Ehlers (R-MI), Lamar Smith (R-TX) and Connie Morella (R-MD).

The connection between funding for basic scientific research and strength of the economy has been pointed out by such diverse sources as former presidential science advisor D. Allan Bromley**,** Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan**,** former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and the Hart-Rudman Commission on National Security.

"Over the last few years, federal funding for non-defense research has been greatly skewed toward support for the biomedical sciences," said Mike Honda (D-San Jose). **"This imbalance is putting our economic future at risk. In Silicon Valley, we are rapidly approaching physical limits that will make it difficult to maintain dramatic improvements in computer chip performance. Dramatic breakthroughs will be needed to continue technological progress, and the economic productivity that depends upon it."**

The fields that provide the basic knowledge needed for these breakthroughs, physics, chemistry, and engineering, have been suffering because of the funding imbalance. Federal funding in these areas declined dramatically from 1993 to 1998: math dropped by 20%, physics by 20%, chemistry by 10%, and some engineering fields by 20-40%.

The bill introduced today provides increases of 15% per year for FY 03-05, which will place the NSF budget on a track to double in 5 years relative to FY 2002. The rate of increases is applied equally to research and education programs. It provides specific funding authorizations for the focused research initiatives in information technology, nanoscale science and engineering, and mathematical sciences, as well as for the Major Research Instrumentation Program.

"Not only are we missing out on the knowledge that research in these areas could be generating, but students are choosing to study other disciplines which are receiving greater federal support, in particular the life sciences," said Honda. **"By doubling funding for NSF, this legislation will provide the incentive for more students to enroll in the physical sciences, math, and engineering. This is essential to maintain America's technical workforce."**

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